

# I--imagine: Waking Up A Generation for Their Own Greatness

What a Year This Was!

My life as an international coffee house owner is exactly what I imagined in seventh grade. After years of . . .

2035



We want our kids to know that at their very core is something good and uniquely special about them ~ to know they matter and have value in our world. May they live their journey with courage, zest and fortitude shining their light and gifts on a hopeful path into their best and brightest future.

~ Adapted from Peter Benson's Sparks



Teacher's Guide to I-imagine's Student Scrapbook

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This Teacher's Guide is a companion e-publication to *I-imagine: Taking My Place in the World* ~ a student scrapbooking journey for exploring, wondering, mining and inventing a vision video for their BEST future.

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Many thanks to Minot Public Schools, ND for hosting *I-imagine's* launching project. Over 90+ Minot students along with their parents and teachers provided a lot of wisdom and inspiration in writing this *Teacher's Guide*. Minot's project photos and teacher/student stories along with their completed vision videos brought the *I-imagine* journey to life.

Special gratitude to **Julie Jaeger** (Minot, ND) and **Elizabeth Stephens** (Forsyth, GA) ~ both Gifted and Talent teachers who contributed ideas, reflections, feedback and encouragement while writing the *I-imagine Teacher's Guide*. Not surprising *I-imagine* is just one of the legacies that Ms. Jaeger and Ms. Stephens have made possible for their students over the years. I am humbled by their on-going dedication and many successes in making good things happen for kids!

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*We cannot always build  
the future for our youth,  
but we can build our  
youth for the future.*

~ Franklin Roosevelt





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# imagine



## Introduction

### Calling All Educators ~ Waking Up a Generation for Their Own Greatness

Prepare to illuminate your students' sense of identity and purpose through a personal, scrapbooking journey inviting them into exploring, mining understanding and then imagining taking their place in the world. Educators will find *I-imagine* a profound experience that increases students' personal investment in their own academic achievement. *I-imagine* guides students through pre-writings and reflections to craft docudramas role-playing in a self-produced, vision video AS IF it were 20 years from now and they are already shining their light, activating their talents and using their unique strengths for good in the world ~ living their BEST life NOW! <sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the most valuable heritage we can provide for future generations is some sense of the Great Work that is before them. - Thomas Berry

The ***I-imagine*** project awakens the dreamer and believer to the realization that the world needs their light - their gifts and passions in making a difference for good. It is grounded in new research of an almost magical impact when hope and joy are nurtured in our youth. <sup>2</sup> Hearts and daily, positive choices come alive as students begin discovering and activating their own life-goals - living in the truth that their lives and talents matter to the world. No question that engaging teachers and parents with Benson's book, *Sparks*, as required, inspired reading during this project will forever change the culture of possibilities for your kids both in school and out!

<sup>1</sup> *DigiTales: The Art of Telling Digital Stories. Chapter 4, Pages xx. Bernajean Porter. 2007.*

<sup>2</sup> *Sparks: How Parents Can Help Ignite the Hidden Strengths of Teenagers. Pages 12-13. Peter Benson. 2008.*



## Urgent Warning to All Adults

Boredom is a growing national epidemic in schools as students struggle with the gaps between their interests and adults' aging agendas. This disengagement with school unquestionably works against the educational goals of preparing students for their futures. Adults and students are actually on the same page IF looking ahead - our youth would acknowledge for themselves, choices being made now about school and learning goals will greatly influence their desired futures. Intrinsic motivation is an important key factor that increases active engagement.

## The Power of Story

Enter the power of story as ONE strategy that activates student affinity and agency in owning their own learning. *I-imagine's Scrapbooking Journey* guides students through inventing a personal storytelling of their future, older self making a difference in the world for good. Finding purpose and passion are the hallmarks of a life that matters, a life worth living. They are also the source of joy and happiness. The greatest gift parents and teachers can give our youth is to help them discover, nourish and act on this truth NOW!

Narrative story is one of the oldest and most proven tools for motivating individuals to engage in change, mobilized by inspired hope while activating positive actions NOW. Our inner stories exert tremendous influence on us, driving us either by limiting or enlarging our sense of reality and possibility. Change the story and we change what is real, acceptable, and possible . . . much like the imaginative cells responsible for a caterpillar's DNA experiences transforming into a newer version of themselves - the butterfly! <sup>3</sup> The story we tell about ourselves shapes everything we see, think and do – often without our even being aware of it. <sup>4</sup>

A handwritten note on lined paper that reads: "The future is not a result of choices among alternative paths offered by the present, but a place that is created -- created first in the mind and will, created next in activity. The future is not some place we are going to, but one we are creating. - Anonymous"

Because the brain does not know the difference between real and imagined, a positive future story created by individuals or communities changes the "neuroplasticity" of brains. These changes can profoundly alter the pattern of neuronal activation in response to experience. According to the theory of neuroplasticity, experience (real or imagined) can actually change both the brain's physical structure (anatomy) and functional organization (physiology) from top to bottom. Creating multimedia, future docudrama stories deepens the sensory and reality of this experience thus increasing the benefits of activating passion, hope and commitment to their vision videos. In *Think Better*, Tim Hurson suggests thinking in terms of a "target future" or an "imagined future" becomes so powerful and compelling that it generates motivation to achieve it. Roger Shanks, author of *Tell Me a Story*, shares his findings of how great inspiring stories literally changes the brain waves via the science of neuroplasticity. The stories we tell ourselves allow us to imagine ourselves as the victorious protagonist, organizing us emotionally and physiologically to proactively manifest have the life we WANT rather than take what we get by pure chance. The ***I-imagine*** project inspires students to actively participate NOW in their best life.

## Project Goals

1. To inspire educators to inspire their students in creating and nourishing their own best future using research-based strategies that activate purpose, hope and passion for learning and living a life that matters.
2. To model the use of effective technology-based, multimedia skills in crafting projects that impact and influence lives.
3. To create a climate and culture of possibilities yielding more academic and personal success by building on student strengths and talents rather than their deficits.
4. To build community between students-to-students, teachers-to-students, teachers-to-parents, and students-to-parents in ways that forge respect, safety, and positive relationships.

<sup>3</sup> *Imaginal Cells: A Story for Our Times*. <http://bit.ly/AcQ8TZ>

<sup>4</sup> *Storyfields: the Narrative Shape of Our Lives and Cultures*. [www.co-intelligence.org/StoryFields.html](http://www.co-intelligence.org/StoryFields.html).

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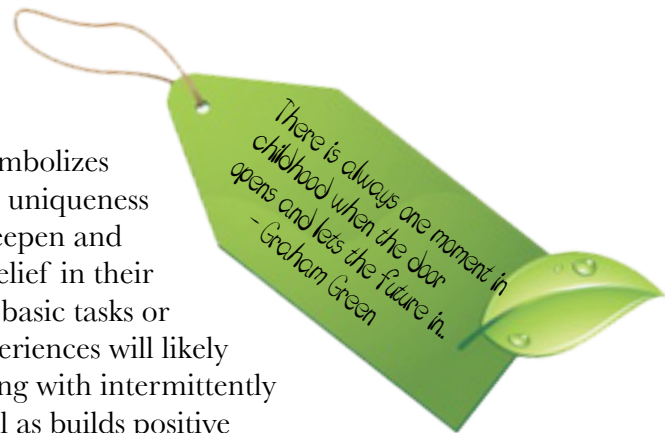
# Awakening the Dreamer ~ Believer

## Unfolding the Scrapbooking Journey

The good news . . . this is not a cookie cutter project lock stepping students through activities! Organizing a positive approach and classroom atmosphere modeled after the writer's multi-tasking workshop spaces will be the best predictor of success. The ***I-imagine*** Project was designed for students as a scrapbooking journey guided by their teachers as a process for awakening the dreamer and believer in each student that their life matters, culminating in a celebration vision video. While some teachers may be tempted to simply assign the making of the video as an engaging activity, the pre-writing and reflection tasks are intentionally designed as a self-directed journey honoring the importance of identifying one's own passion and light.

## Pacing the Experience

Prepare your students' experience for maximum success! Time symbolizes what is valued in our life. Making time to unfold and celebrate the uniqueness of each human spirit during this scrapbooking journey will also deepen and strengthen the rich experiences needed for students to awaken a belief in their personal power to create a life that matters. Teachers can plan for basic tasks or take deeper time dives. But beware that fast tracking students' experiences will likely negate any benefits possible. The hands-on, introspective tasks along with intermittently sharing within a larger community activates the possibilities as well as builds positive relationships that will reap a multitude of benefits through and beyond the school year as well.



Knowing that time is precious in all classrooms, most of the scrapbooking tasks were developed to be assigned as Home Time allowing students to have personal creative time as well as minimizing the demands on class time. Some teachers may be able to strategize their class time to focus solely on the ***I-imagine*** project incorporating many standards into the process. Or after getting the big picture of unfolding the scrapbooking journey, other teachers will want to consider simultaneous pacing of another unit of study like a literature unit, a social studies unit or some other independent curriculum at the same time while intermittently pacing Class Time needed for task introductions, sharing, reflecting and celebrating of the students' ***I-imagine*** experiences.

## Using the Teacher's Guide

Hopefully teachers will launch the ***I-imagine*** project in collaboration with other colleagues as learning mates for think tanks, reflections and strategies generally needed in launching new curriculum experiences. Each of the *Exploring, Wondering, Mining and Inventing* tasks in the ***I-imagine Scrapbook*** have "Getting Ready" overviews of purpose, strategies, and resources along with detailed lesson plans to guide time, ideas, and processes. Also all teachers are urged to embrace the professional challenge of creating their own ***I-imagine*** vision videos.

**Printing Tip:** *I-imagine's Student Scrapbook* needs heavy paper to hold up for pasting and taping. Try #50 paper which is heavy and will still work in a majority of copy machines. If not printing the *Teacher's Guide* in color, it is recommended to use grayscale printing options for optimal reading.

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## Leaf Notes and More

Suggestions, ideas and strategies in this ***Teacher's Guide*** are culled from years of classroom experience as well as incorporating lessons learned specifically from rounds of prototyping the ***I-imagine*** project with a multitude of students and their teachers. Even though this *Teacher's Guide* lays out a suggested structure for creating successful vision videos, it really packages best-of-the-best classroom practices for any project with the outcome of students owning, investing and shining out their best work. Special attention is given with each task to seed teachers with opportunities for integrating technology as well as guiding processes for high quality craftsmanship while using multimedia. Certainly beyond these suggestions and ideas, teachers will likely shape their own style and approach for implementation. Thus open spaces and “leaf notes” have been left for your own planning, questions, thoughts, reflections and advice to yourself. See *Guides' Planning Project Organizer* [pgs. 28-31].



### Reflecting / Planning Before Beginning

Notes			